

MAR 19 2004

Department of Water Resources
City of Colfax400 N. Mill
P.O. Box 229
Colfax, WA 99111
509 397-3861 FAX: 397-3044

March 15, 2004

Karl Dreher, Director
Idaho Department of Water Resources
1301 N. Orchard Street
Boise, ID 83706

Dear Mr. Dreher,

The City of Colfax would like to weigh in, as have other cities and counties affected by the Palouse Basin aquifers, on your evaluation of and ultimate decision on whether or not to designate the Idaho portion of the Grande Rhonde Aquifer a Critical Groundwater Management Area and the Wanapum Aquifer as a Groundwater Management Area. We urge you to take no action on these designations.

We believe the designations above could have only a very limited affect on the management of these aquifers in that a large portion of both aquifers fall outside your state's jurisdiction and control. The City of Colfax has been active with the WRIA 34 watershed planning unit and the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC), both interstate cooperative efforts to manage water use and availability in our area, and believe the answer to water management of both the Grande Rhonde and Wanapum aquifers can only be effective if local entities on both sides of the Idaho-Washington border share the effort.

Much has already been accomplished in water conservation and aquifer stabilization and efforts are underway to further explore the Grande Rhonde Aquifer—its limits, direction of flow and interconnectivity—and explore ways to enhance recharge. There is no lack of interest and participation by local entities in protecting this essential resource.

Sincerely,

Norma Becker
MayorCc: Pullman Mayor Glenn Johnson
Moscow Mayor Marshall Comstock
Whitman County Commissioners
Latah County Commissioners
Larry Kirkland, PBAC